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# BOHEMIAN

(CZECH)

# HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

A LECTURE DELIVERED  
BY  
CHARLES PERGLER, L. L. B.  
AT  
THE STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF MINNESOTA  
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## BOHEMIAN—(CZECH) HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS.

### I.

It is only a truism to say that the days of self-sufficiency of any country are gone never to return.

For a generation, ever since the Congress of Berlin, the prediction was often and freely made that the future European war would start in the Balkans. It did so start, and lately, as a result of the conflagration kindled in the Southeastern Europe, the United States more than once have been brought to the very brink of war. Yet, prior to this war, how many of us interested ourselves in the Balkan problem? How many of us were aware of the fearful results of the world's failure to sensibly and justly solve the problem of small nationalities in Europe?

This, of itself, is a sufficient justification for a lecture on any one of the small nationalities in Europe.

It may no longer be claimed that we are not our brothers' keepers. Sociologically speaking, the doctrine so crudely expressed in the saying, "Each man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost," has been relegated to the limbo of things obsolete and no longer true in any sense. It is contrary to our conception of enlightened self-interest, it is contrary to our modern ethical opinions and beliefs.

What is true of relations of individuals within a state is true of international relations. No nation on the face of the globe is safe so long as any other nation is oppressed and has to struggle for freedom and liberty.

Oppression and tyranny breed resistance. In the words of William Lloyd Garrison, "Oppression and insurrection go hand in hand, as cause and effect are allied together. In what age of the world have tyrants reigned with impunity, or the victims of tyranny not resisted unto blood?" Friction growing out of the relation of oppressed and oppressors may, at any time endanger the world's peace.

This is to be especially considered when we speak of a country concerning which Bismarck said: "Bohemia is a fortress created by God himself." To paraphrase the expression of an eminent English author, Mr. Seton Watson, it behooves the world, in its own interest, as well as for the sake of justice and humanity, to see to it that Bohemia becomes a fortress, not of reaction, but of liberty.

Best American traditions point in the same direction. We ourselves attained our independence with the aid of idealistic individuals of other nationalities. The names of Lafayette, Von Steuben and Pulaski, speak for themselves. These highminded men drew the sword in defense of an ideal, against what they conceived to be wrong.

Whatever may have been the subsequent vicissitudes of the Monroe Doctrine, the fact remains that one of the motives leading to its enunciation was American desire to see free, democratic and republican institutions spread and prosper in the western hemisphere. It should never be forgotten that the Monroe Doctrine was aimed against the unholy Holy Alliance.

When Hungary was struggling against Austrian despotism, Daniel Webster, then Secretary of State, did not hesitate to assert the right of America to sympathize with the efforts of any nation to acquire liberty. Cuba was liberated by American effort, and Americans always sympathized with those who were oppressed, Belgians, Armenians, or any other race. In the words of Professor Bliss Perry, "The ideal passions of patriotism, of liberty, of loyalty to home and section, of humanitarian and missionary effort, have all burned with a clear flame in the United States."

Civilization would be a sham and a fraud, and a hollow mockery, were there not certain things of permanent value, were there no eternal verities. It may be true that most things have only a relative value, but this world would be a sad place indeed, and life would hardly be worth living, if out of the mint of centuries of struggle and toil nothing came that we could look upon as an immutable treasure. There is such a thing as right and wrong, and as between right and wrong no individual, no nation, can afford to be indifferent.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,  
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;  
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,  
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right,  
And the choice goes by forever, 'twixt that darkness and that light.  
Has thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand,  
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against our land?  
Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet, 't is Truth alone is strong,  
And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng  
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong."

—James Russell Lowell

## II.

The Czechs, or Bohemians, are a branch of the Slavonic race, which is of central European origin,

according to Professor Lubor Niederle, of the Bohemian University of Prague. The Slavs are pure Aryans, just as the Celts, Germans and Latins.

Many popular prejudices to the contrary notwithstanding, the Slavonic races have contributed their share to modern culture and civilization.

When we think of the Russians, we must inevitably also think of Puškin, Gogol, Turgeněv, Dostojevský, and Tolstoj, names that are mentioned only with respect, whenever the world's literary treasures are discussed. Russian music is becoming well known and appreciated in the English speaking world. In the field of mathematical research, the names of Lobačevský and Minkovský are known to all mathematicians, and in the realm of physical science we need only to point to Lebeděv, while the name of the great biologist, Mečnikov, is almost a household word. The names of Plechanov and Karějev are known to all students of sociology.

The Poles have given to the world Copernicus, the poet Mickiewicz, the novelist Sinkiewicz, and a host of others.

The most admired artist in London just now is the Serbian sculptor, Mestrovič.

It must always be remembered that the Czech, John Hus, preceded Luther by one hundred years; that Komenský was one of the greatest educators of all ages; that Peter Chelčický preceded Tolstoj by four hundred years; that the Czech warrior Žižka is regarded as one of the originators of modern strategy.

In fact, Bohemia has had fascinating history, full of misfortunes and suffering, it is true, yet also replete with incidents and struggles, of which any individual of Czech origin may well be proud.

Mr. John W. Burgess, of Columbia University, who, since the outbreak of the present war, has become such an ardent defender and advocate of all things Teutonic, in his otherwise great work on "Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law" lays down the proposition that the Teutonic nations are the political nations par excellence, and that the Slavs and Greeks lack in political capacity.

The history of Bohemia furnishes a refutation of this assumption as far as the Slavs are concerned.

As early as the seventh century, when the historical data relative to Bohemia begun, we find traces of a Bohemian State.

In the eleventh century, Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Poland were united under Břetislav I, and, in the words of Count Luetzow, "The idea of a West Slav Empire seemed on the point of being

realized, but Germany stepped in to prevent the formation of a powerful Slav State on her borders."

Otokar II., of the House of Přemysl, for a time extended Bohemian domination from the Adriatic to the Baltic.

Under the "National King", George of Poděbrad, in the fifteenth century, Bohemia was a European power of the first order.

All these accomplishments, attained under sovereigns belonging to houses of Czech origin, certainly show a high degree of political capacity.

The fact that later Bohemia succumbed to overwhelming brute force is not proof of want of political capacity. After all, might does not make right, and if right happens to be overcome by might, that furnishes for might no justification.

### III.

During the fifteenth century the Czechs fought for the freedom of conscience against the whole of Europe. For more than a generation they victoriously repulsed the onslaughts of army after army. This was the time when Bohemia became known as the country of the book and the cup; this was the time when "the meanest Hussite woman knew the Bible better than any Roman priest", as testified to by Pope Pius II. (Aeneas Sylvius.)

But the country paid the penalty for the bravery of its people and their courage and perseverance in fighting for what they conceived to be right. When the Hapsburgs came to the Bohemian throne in 1526, and forthwith launched upon a career of encroachment upon Bohemian liberties, of centralization and germanization, and of broken pledges, the Bohemian power of resistance was largely spent.

The Hapsburgs were called to the Bohemian throne by a free choice of the Bohemian people, and in mounting the throne, they confirmed all the ancient liberties and privileges of Bohemia, only to later break every promise, pledge and oath taken by them.

At this time Bohemia became associated with German-Austria and with Hungary, but she remained an independent Kingdom, being bound to Austria and Germany merely by the person of the common king.

One of the most important acts of the reign of Ferdinand the First was destruction of the autonomy of Bohemian cities in 1547, accompanied by the execution of two knights and two citizens, who shortly before that were leaders in a movement,



aiming at the re-establishment of the elective character of the Bohemian Crown; establishment of liberty for all religious beliefs in Bohemia, and the curtailment of the rights of the sovereign in various points.

After that the history of Bohemia is largely one of a struggle between the Hapsburgs, aiming at centralization and germanization, and violating their oaths to maintain the independence of the Bohemian State, on the one hand, and the Bohemians, seeking to preserve their independence, on the other hand.

The struggle culminated in a revolt, signalized by the "Defenestration of Prague" in 1618, when the representatives of Bohemian nobility threw from the window of Hradčany, the royal castle in Prague, representatives of the Hapsburg King, following this incident up by a dethronement of the Hapsburg dynasty and the Elector Palatine's election to Bohemian Kingship.

But in 1620 the Hapsburgs were victorious in the Battle of White Mountain, and a period of indescribable martyrdom began for the Czech nationality.

After the battle of White Mountain, twenty-seven leaders of the Bohemian Rebellion against Ferdinand the Second were executed, many of them tortured, and thirty-six thousand families forced to leave their native land and their property confiscated.

The ruthless persecution following the battle of White Mountain all but wiped out the Czechs as a distinct national individuality. A policy of germanization was followed unmercifully, and indeed toward the eighteenth century the Czech nation was looked upon as dead.

The results following the battle of White Mountain are thus stated by an eminent Bohemian author: "On the battlefield of White Mountain, an iron die was cast not only to decide the fate of the crown of St. Wenzeslaus and the Imperial Crown of Germany, but also the fate and language of the Bohemian nation. The fatal decision cost the rebellious noble his head, deprived the burger of his property, enslaved the peasant, destroyed the nation, wiped out the literature. As a strong tree stood our literature, prior to the White Mountain catastrophe. The axe was applied to the trunk, the branches dropped, and the falling leaves enriched foreign soil, while the stump rooted in domestic soil remained without branches, without blossoms, without fruit. The flower of the nation perished under the hand of the executioner, and died on foreign soil; the enslaved and down-trodden remnants of the people remaining in the land, impoverished and held in contempt, forgot their past,

their rebellion, and their martyrs of the present and the past." *Pisemnictvi Česke*, by Dr. Václav Flajšhans—page 402.

#### IV.

The peasant may perhaps be called the savior of Bohemian nationality. While the Hapsburgs succeeded in almost completely germanizing the cities, the flame of Bohemian national life was kept alive in the country districts and in the villages. Without this fact, the efforts of Czech men of letters, who begin to appear during the first years of the nineteenth century, to arouse the Czech nationality to a new national consciousness, would have been futile.

Until the revolutionary year of 1848, the efforts of leading Czechs were largely literary and devoted to a revival of the Czech language as a medium of literary expression. The movement finally, as was inevitable, obtained a political coloring, and the forties see the establishment of Czech press, led by Karel Havlíček; a brilliant journalist in a very real sense of the term, and the revolutionary year of 1848 brings a political renaissance.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the nation reached a cultural level surpassing that of any other nationality in Austria. In literature and arts it is second to no nation of its numerical strength. In modern times it has produced at least three poets of the first rank, Vrchlichý, Čech, and Machar. Of the musicians and composers, one need only to mention Smetana, Dvořák, and Kovařovic. Of the novelists there is a legion, and they have produced real works of art. In philosophy, the names of Masaryk, Krejčí and Drtina are known to all scholars.

In cultural respects the Czechs stand at the head of all Austrian nationalities. They have not quite four per cent of illiterates, while the Germans of Austria have six per cent, and the Magyars forty per cent.

It cannot be over-emphasized that all this progress was achieved by the Czechs in the teeth of the most violent and brutal opposition of the Austrian government, and the Austrian Germans. Few are the Czech schools indeed that were not established as the result of a fierce parliamentary struggle, and without years of hard fighting.

Even now, eleven million Germans in Austria have five universities, while ten million Czechs, including Slovaks, have but one university.

As regards institutions corresponding to our high schools, the situation is no better; indeed, before

the war, Czechs were frequently forced to struggle for adequate common school facilities. Municipalities that still happen to be in German hands refuse to provide suitable school buildings for children of Czech citizens. This leads to the germanization of thousands of Czech children. The only means of defense the Czechs have against this barbarous treatment is a voluntary organization which maintains schools in many places for Czech children from funds raised by contributions of patriotic Czechs.

As another example of the unfair treatment meted out to the Czechs under the Austrian government, we may refer to the fact that in Bohemian cities, where there happens to be a German majority, actual or only apparent, created by fraudulent and false statistics, the courts frequently refuse to transact business with Czechs in their mother tongue, and to hear complaints in the language of a large majority of the country's population.

All this, of course, makes a hollow mockery of the nineteenth section of the constitution of Austria which reads as follows:

"All races of the state enjoy equal rights, and every race has an inviolable right to assert its nationality and to cultivate its language. The equal rights of all languages of the country, in school, office, and public life are recognized by the state."

As an example of the level to which opponents of the Czech nationality descended, even prior to the war, we may cite an expression of Mr. Peschka, then a member of the Austrian Cabinet, who several years ago at a public meeting in Graz declared that the struggle between the Bohemians and Germans ultimately would be decided by force, and that in such contest the Austrian Germans would be victorious with the aid of their kinsmen from the Empire, and that the result would be a complete wiping out of the Czechs.

## V.

In speaking of the Czechs, we must not forget the Slovaks, who are really a part of the same ethnic group, so much so in fact that now they are demanding that they be united with their Czech brethren in an independent Bohemian-Slovak State.

Three million Slovaks live under the Magyar rule in Hungary. The fact may come as a distinct shock to many Americans, but it is a fact just the same that what the Slovaks had to suffer under Magyar rule even before the war beggars all description.

The Magyars have a trick of posing before the world as chivalry personified and as defenders of liberty. In the United States, their struggle against Austria in 1848 and 1849 is well known and the traditions of the Kossuth visit in the early fifties of the last century are still strong. Americans find it hard to believe that the Magyars, who attained practical independence in 1867, gained it merely to oppress other nationalities infinitely worse than they themselves ever suffered.

Hungary forms with Austria what is usually known as a Realunion. Hungary has more than twenty million inhabitants, but of these the ruling Magyar nation forms not quite nine million. The rest of the population consists of Slovaks, Roumanians, Germans, Ruthenians, Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. The Government is in the hands of an oligarchy of feudal nobility. For anything like it we would look in vain anywhere else in Europe. It is Asiatic in the worst sense of the term. Hungary has only about a million of voters, and Hungarian elections are a synonym for violence and corruption. Owing to the extreme exploitation of the people by feudal nobility, before the war a continuous stream of immigrants came to the United States from Hungary.

For three million Slovaks there does not exist in Hungary a single adequate common school conducted in the Slovak language. Even before the war the Slovak press was systematically persecuted, and Slovak papers subjected to unimaginable chicanery. It is an interesting fact that there are more Slovak papers in the United States than in Hungary. These American papers the Hungarian government considers a menace to the Magyar state, and accordingly refuses them postal privileges.

The leaders of the Slovak people are imprisoned whenever the slightest pretext arises, and Slovak editors in Hungary are more familiar with Magyar jails than with their own editorial offices.

These are generalizations, of course, but within the scope of this lecture it is impossible to go into details. However, if details are desired, let me refer those interested to the comprehensive work of Mr. Seton-Watson (*Scotus Viator*) on the "Racial Problems in Hungary". This book contains a wealth of detail and constitutes a terrific indictment of the Magyar oligarchy.

Magyar misrepresentations for years succeeded in deluding the world into the belief that Hungary was an "isle of liberty", as Count Apponyi once expressed it. The world is now beginning to realize

that the Hungarian isle of liberty is a vast penitentiary for all non-Magyar nationalities, with the difference, however, that in an ordinary penitentiary usually only the guilty are imprisoned, while for non-Magyar nationalities Hungary is a jail because they refuse to betray some of the most cherished ideals of the race.

## VI.

Metternich, the arch-reactionary, once called Italy a mere geographical expression. This statement was never really true of Italy, but it is true when we speak of Austria. Who ever heard of any one calling himself an Austrian? Even the present Austrian Emperor once asserted that he was a German Prince. There is no Austrian language, no Austrian literature, no Austrian nationality, no Austrian civilization. Most Austrian subjects would consider it nothing short of an insult to be called Austrians.

Yet the impression is not to be gained that the Austrian state never had its justification. Dynasties, no matter how powerful and astute, after all cannot form states unless aided by social, economic and political factors.

Austria's justification for existence may be found in Asiatic invasions, that is, of the Huns (Magyars) and later of the Turks. With the waning power of Turkey, Austria loses its ruling idea; it becomes a rudderless craft on the vast sea of political life.

But the Bohemians for a long time did not seek Austria's dismemberment. They felt that the Austrian State might become a federalized union of nationalities with equal rights. Austria's mission was to become a guardian of European peace by the creation and maintenance of a United States of nations in Central Europe. That is what Palacký, the great Czech historian and statesman, had in mind when he declared, "If there were no Austria, it would be necessary to create one".

The condition precedent to Austria's existence in modern times became justice to, and fair treatment of, all nationalities,

This condition was never lived up to. Since 1866, and especially since the formation of the defunct Triple Alliance, Austria became nothing else but an appendage of Berlin, and it is Berlin only that has upheld and still upholds the rule of the German minority in one half of Austria, and of the Magyar minority in the other half. Austria has been for more than a generation, and is now, merely Germany's vassal. What right to existence has a state like that?



Palacký himself fully realized before his death that it is hopeless to attempt to retrieve Austria, and that is the secret of his later equally famous statement: "Before Austria was, we were, and when Austria no longer is, we still shall be".

I am not insensible of the obligations imposed upon me by your hospitality, and I shall refrain from any expression of personal opinion as to the cause of the present war, but permit me to state as a fact that, in the judgment of all Bohemians, this war was provoked by Vienna at the behest of Berlin. Bohemians well know that as early as 1913 Austria attempted to cause a war with Serbia by means of documents forged by the Austrian legation in Belgrade, and they know that Austrian militarists have long been hoping for an opportunity to attack Serbia.

Austria has become a state that may be compared to a mother devouring her own children.

Again, Austria in entering the present conflict has forced her Slav subjects into what they regard as a fratricidal struggle. It is only natural that the Czechs think only with horror of even the possibility of being compelled to fire upon their Slav brethren, the Russians and the Serbs.

Also, the Czech public opinion ever since the national renaissance in the first half of the nineteenth century has always been pro-French and pro-English.

From all this it is easy to understand why the Czechs look upon the present war with loathing and horror, and why it has led them to demand independence regardless of Austria's ultimate fate.

The Czechs and Slovaks are now a unit in asking for an independent Bohemian - Slovak State. Independence — that one word expresses the supreme hopes and aspirations of all real Czechs and Slovaks.

## VII.

The Czech and Slovak demand for independence was voiced by the Bohemian Foreign Committee in a manifesto issued in Paris, November 14th, 1915, the foremost of the signers of this historical document being Prof. Masaryk, deputy, former member of the Austrian delegations, chairman of the independent Czech deputies Club from Bohemia and Moravia in Austrian Parliament and a famous Czech philosopher, and Mr. Jos. Duerich, member of the Austrian Parliament and president of the "Komensky" Society for the support of Czech schools in Vienna.

This manifesto is simply an expression of the opinion of the whole Czech nation, as shown by the behavior of Czech troops following the declaration

of war against Serbia. Czech regiments have been surrendering to the "enemy" whenever an opportunity has afforded itself. As an illustration, let me cite the example of the 28th regiment, recruited from the Prague population, which on the third day of April, 1915, surrendered in the Carpathians to the Russians, led by its officers, as best attested by an army order, signed by the Austrian Emperor himself, striking this regiment as forever "disgraced" from the army roll.

This behavior of the Bohemian troops in the Austrian army is not due to cowardice. Many of the soldiers who have surrendered have re-enlisted in the Russian army, and are now fighting against Austria. There is a Bohemian legion fighting in the Russian army which has been frequently mentioned for its valor in the orders of the day. Indeed, many of the Bohemian soldiers serving in the Russian army and fighting against Austria have been decorated for valor by order of the Russian Czar. There is a Bohemian legion fighting with the armies of France and only recently twenty members of this legion received from a special envoy of the Russian Czar the Cross of Sts George, always awarded only for conspicuous deed. of bravery.

When the war broke out, the Austrian government — the only one of all belligerent countries, Turkey not excepted — did not dare to convoke the Austrian Parliament, fearing especially the Czech protest, but it did attempt to induce the Czech political parties to publish a manifesto supporting the war. For answer it received silence which at this time is indeed more eloquent than words.

The Czech press is today muzzled and leading Czech politicians and statesmen are jailed. Dr. Karel Kramár, besides Prof. Masaryk the best known of Czech leaders, even now is on trial for treason against the Austrian State. Deputy Kľofáč is in prison since the outbreak of the war, and Dr. Scheiner, the President of the Bohemian Sokol (Gymnastic) Societies, is also in prison.

The "Neues Wiener Tagblatt", with the permission of the Austrian censor, recently published statistics of executions in Austria since the outbreak of the war, and according to these figures during the first fourteen months of the war Austria Hungary has been the scene of the execution of three thousand three hundred seventy-three persons. These executions occurred for political offenses, and are divided as follows:

Slavs: In Bohemia, 720 persons hanged or shot; in Moravia, 245 persons; in Bosnia and Herzegovina,

800 persons; in Galicia, 486 persons; in Bukowina, 330 persons.

Italians: Two hundred persons executed in Trieste, 90 in Istria, 330 in the Trentino.

Austria is conducting war against her own people, and her people are looking forward to the time when, concerning her fate, they will be able to quote Robert G. Ingersoll on "The Doom of Empires":

"The traveler standing amid the ruins of ancient cities and empires, seeing on every side the fallen pillar and the prostrate wall, asks why did these cities fall, why did these empires crumble? And the Ghost of the Past, the wisdom of ages, answers: These temples, these palaces, these cities, the ruins of which you stand upon, were built by tyranny and injustice. The hands that built them were unpaid. The backs that bore the burdens also bore the marks of the lash. They were built by slaves to satisfy the vanity and ambition of thieves and robbers. For these reasons they are dust.

"Their civilization was a lie. Their laws merely regulated robbery and established theft. They bought and sold the bodies and souls of men, and the mournful wind of desolation, sighing amid their crumbling ruins, is a voice of prophetic warning to those who would repeat the infamous experiment, uttering the great truth, that no nation founded upon slavery, either of body or mind, can stand."

## VIII.

The irony of fate has it that in demanding the establishment of a Bohemian-Slovak national state, Czechs and Slovaks may safely refer to the theories of the Germanic school of political science, led in America, as heretofore suggested, by Mr. Burgess, from whose "Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law", (Vol 1. pages 38 and 39), I again take the liberty to quote:

"The national state is the most modern product of political history, political science and practical politics. It comes nearer to solving all the problems of political organization than any other system as yet developed. In the first place, it rescues the world from the monotony of the universal empire. This is an indispensable condition of political progress. We advance politically, as well as individually, by contact, competition and antagonism. The universal empire suppresses all this in its universal reign of peace, which means, in the long run, stagnation and despotism. At the same time, the national state solves the problem of the relation between states by the evolution of the



system of international law. Through this it preserves most of the advantages of the universal empire while discarding its one-sided and intolerant character. In the second place, the national state solves the problem of the relation of sovereignty to liberty; so that while it is the most powerful political organization that the world has ever produced, it is still the freest. This is easy to comprehend. The national state permits the participation of the governed in the government. In a national state the population have a common language and a common understanding of the principles of rights and the character of wrongs. This common understanding is the strongest moral basis which a government can possibly have; and, at the same time, it secures the enactment and administration of laws whose righteousness must be acknowledged, and whose effect will be the realization of the truest liberty. In the third place, the national state solves the question of the relation of central to local government, in that it rests upon the principle of self-government in both domains. In the perfect national state there can thus be no jealousy between the respective spheres; and the principle will be universally recognized that, where uniformity is necessary, it must exist; but that where uniformity is not necessary, variety is to reign in order that through it a deeper and truer harmony may be discovered."

Mr. Burgess concludes that the national state is the most modern and complete solution of the whole problem of political organization which the world has as yet produced, and Czechs and Slovaks might well rest their case on this proposition.

For that matter, the fact cannot be over-emphasized that the Czechs were deprived of the national state they once had by force. In demanding independence, Czechs can plant themselves not only upon the proposition that any nation has the right to self-government, but also upon laws and constitutions which have never been repealed or abrogated with the consent of the Bohemian people.

Almost four centuries ago Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia (with the two Lusatias) constituted an independent kingdom, just as Hungary was then an independent kingdom. In 1526 Czechs called the Hapsburg dynasty to the Bohemian throne for practically the same reasons and on the same conditions as the Magyars. Together with the Pragmatic Sanction, the terms under which the Hapsburgs were called to the Hungarian throne formed what we might call the legal foundation of the Hungarian revolution in 1848. The Czech case, legally speaking, is every

bit as strong, if not stronger, as was the Magyar case in 1848. The compact of 1526, together with the coronation oaths and a large number of other historical documents too numerous to be here mentioned, form the legal basis of the Czech revolution in 1915.

De facto the Bohemians lost their independence, de jure they still have it, and are now demanding something of which they were illegally deprived. Just as no one can be legally deprived of his property by force and violence and without due process of law, just so the Czechs retain their legal title to independence.

All this of course makes the Czech case unassailable, but it could not be regarded as weak even without these historical and legal reasons and arguments. Indeed, once a nation has become conscious of its nationality, demands liberty and independence and has proven its possibility by its economic and cultural development, its right to independence is taken out of the sphere of debatable questions.

It makes little difference whether the nation referred to is large or small. Questions of right and morals do not depend upon size and quantity. Moreover, the belief in the necessity of large states, rife in certain circles of economic and political theorists, is one of the superstitions that periodically grip mankind, only to be abandoned upon a sober second thought. Again, the reaction against this superstition is already beginning to set in, as evidenced by the recent address of Mr. L. P. Jacks, editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, before the London Sociological Society.

Mr. Jacks thinks that before long we shall see the rise of a new criticism of the whole idea of government. What are, he asks, the limits of government? Will not the tendency be to eliminate a number of unmanageable propositions from the scope of human design? Mr. Jacks believes that the next great movement of political thought will be in the direction of restricting rather than expanding, concentrating rather than spreading, the objects of social endeavor. The deeper thought, he says, starts from the human end of the problem; its first principle is that "industrial civilization is made for man, not man for industrial civilization".

Lord Bryce thinks that possibly the modern states have become too big to manage.

But it is necessary to point out that independent Bohemia will not be a small state — will not be, I say, because I firmly believe this war must bring the Czechs freedom and liberty.

An independent Bohemian-Slovak state will have a population of over twelve million, and its territorial extent will be about fifty thousand square miles. The Bohemian-Slovak state will be eighth among twenty-two European States.

Economically and financially Bohemia is the richest of Austrian "provinces", and after the war, separated from Austria, she will be richer, because she will not be forced to support the economically and financially "passive" Austrian lands. Today Czechs pay more than four hundred million crowns yearly by way of taxes to the Austrian government, but all this money stays in Vienna and Bohemian needs are being neglected.

A standard authority thus states the industrial resources of Bohemia:

"The industry of Bohemia, favored by its central situation, has long rendered it one of the most important governments of the Austrian Empire. Spinning and weaving are extensively carried on in the northern and southeastern districts; manufactures of lace, ribbons, metal, and wood work, chemical products, and other branches of skilled industry are also largely developed. Pottery, porcelain, glassware, cutting of precious stones, give employment to many hands. The glassware of Bohemia alone, which is known all over Europe, employs 50,000 workers. Large quantities of beer (Pilsener) of the kind known as lager are exported. Prague, the capital, is the centre of the manufactures and of the commerce of the country. The largest towns are Prague, Pilsen, Reichenberg, Budweis, Teplitz, Aussig, and Eger. For internal intercourse there are excellent highways, extending to 10,000 miles, and several important lines of railway leading both southeast to Vienna and northwest toward Dresden." (The Americana, Vol. 3, article Bohemia).

An independent Bohemia will mean the addition of a cultured and economically self-sustaining state to the international family.

## IX.

Throughout Bohemian history we find evidences of idealism. Spiritual values have never been underestimated by the Czechs. The Hussite wars, while they had their social and economic background, after all were fought for a religious and civil ideal, for communion in both kinds and for the rights of the Czech language against the aggression of the Germans. Palacký may have been somewhat carried away by national pride when he said so, but nevertheless his

contention that the Hussite War is "the first war in the world's history that was fought not for material interest, but for intellectual ones, for ideas", can well be defended.

The Czechs have their faults and vices, no doubt, just as all nationalities have them, but hypocrisy certainly is not one of these.

The recent Bohemian declaration of independence, for that it is, declares that, "We take the side of the fighting Slav nations and their Allies, without regard to victory or defeat, because right is on their side. The problem which side is right in this fatal war is a question of principle and of political morals, a question which at present no honest and sincere statesman, no conscientious and thinking nation, can evade."

This statement, I think, represents the best Czech thought on the subject of politics and political morals. To the Czechs politics is not a game, but it is the expression of the nation's hopes and desires. Best proof of this lies in the fact that the manifesto was issued when the Russian army was forced to retreat from the Carpathians, and when the situation from the Allies' point of view was gloomy indeed.

Freedom regained, liberty achieved, and such a nation certainly will add still more to the world's spiritual treasures.

## X.

The American Institute of International Law at its session, held in the City of Washington, on the 6th day of January, 1916, adopted a declaration, now known as the Declaration of the Rights of Nations, in which the following passages occur:

"Every nation has the right to exist and to protect and to conserve its existence; but this right neither implies the right nor justifies the act of the State to protect itself or to conserve its existence by the commission of unlawful acts against innocent and unoffending States.

"This right is and is to be understood in the sense in which right to life is understood in national law, according to which it is unlawful for a human being to take human life unless it be necessary so to do in self-defense against an unlawful attack threatening the life of the party unlawfully attacked.

"Every nation has the right to independence in the sense that it has a right to the pursuit of happiness and is free to develop itself without interference or control from other states, provided that in so doing it does not interfere with, or violate the rights of other States.

“Every nation is in law and before law the equal of every other State composing the society of nations, and all States have the right to claim, and, according to the Declaration of Independence of the United States, ‘to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them.’

“Every nation entitled to a right by the law of nations is entitled to have that right respected and protected by all other nations, for right and duty are correlative, and the right of one is the duty of all to observe.”

In laying down these principles, the authors largely had in mind questions of international law and the rights of states. Nevertheless, these very principles apply with equal force to nationalities struggling for independence, or seeking to regain it. Every nation has the right to independence.

Certain it is that the terms agreed to by a future conference of the belligerent powers will not lead to a permanent peace unless they have due regard to the principle of nationality. The peace following this war cannot be durable and cannot be permanent if ancient injustices are perpetuated.

At this critical juncture of the world’s history, it is well to recall what Wendell Phillips said after the outbreak of the Civil War, in December, 1861, in an address in Boston:

“In my view, the bloodiest war ever waged is infinitely better than the happiest slavery which ever fattened man into obedience. And yet I love peace. But it is real peace; not peace such as we have had, not peace that meant lynch-law in the Carolinas, and mob-law in New York; not peace that meant chains around Boston Court-house, a gag on the lips of statesmen, and the slave sobbing himself to sleep in curses. No more such peace for me; no peace that is not born of justice, and does not recognize the rights of every race and every man.”





# Some American and English Books on Bohemia



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# Some Booklets on the Bohemian Cause

*Published By The*  
**BOHEMIAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE**



## **DECLARATION of the Bohemian (Czech) Foreign Committee**

**ADDENDA:**

Professor T. G. Masaryk as a Lecturer in London University.  
Comments of London Papers.

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## **The Position of the Bohemians (Czechs) in the European War**

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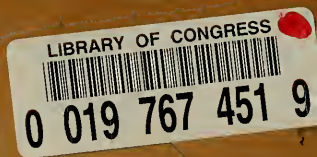
1. Why the Bohemians are not friends of the Germans.
2. Bohemians for America and against Austria.
3. Resolution of protest against the "Appeal to the American People".
4. British, French and Russian comments on the attitude of the Bohemians.

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## **Bohemia's Claim to Independence**

An address delivered by Charles Pergler L. L. B. before the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives of the United States.



# Bohemian (Czech) National Alliance in America



The Bohemian National Alliance in America is an organization composed of the "Sokol" gymnastic societies, of the principal Czech fraternal organizations, of social clubs and labor bodies. It has branches in most of the larger cities of the United States, as well as many branches in Canada. It is entitled to speak for the 700,000 Bohemians in the United States.

The Bohemian National Alliance is working actively for the freedom of Bohemia, an object which is bound up with the success of the Allies. It opposes the false neutrality tactics employed by Germans living in the United States, particularly their efforts to stop the export of munitions of war.

With the Bohemian National Alliance in America are affiliated similar organizations of Czechs living in London, Paris and Switzerland.

